

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W
-----105785 161920Z /46

P 161222Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8946

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 DAR ES SALAAM 2589

NODIS/CHEROKEE

FOR AF DICK MOOSE FROM LOW

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDEV, RH
SUBJECT: RHODESIA: CURTIS MEETINGS

1. I HAD THREE FAIRLY LENGTHY MEETINGS WITH TOM CURTIS, ALL AT HIS INSTANCE: SUNDAY NIGHT, JUNE 10, TUESDAY AFTERNOON, JUNE 13, AND SHORTLY BEFORE DEPARTURE FROM SALISBURY THURSDAY MORNING. CURTIS WANTED INFORMATION ON ISSUES AND POSITIONS OF THE PARTIES AND AN OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE AND COMPARE HIS IMPRESSIONS ON RHODESIA. I HAD THE STRONG IMPRESSION THAT HE WAS SOMEWHAT SHAKEN BY THE CHANGES WHICH HE HAS FOUND IN RHODESIA. THE HARD LINE WHITE ATTITUDE WHICH HE KNEW TWO YEARS AGO HAS CLEARLY CHANGED AND HE HAS FOUND MORE WILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT THE CHANGED SITUATION THAN HE HAD EXPECTED. THIS HAS LED HIM TO AN INITIAL SYMPATHY WITH THE ATTEMPT AT AN INTERNAL SETTLEMENT, THOUGH HE RECOGNIZES INTELLECTUALLY THAT THE NEW WHITE ATTITUDE IS ESSENTIALLY IRRELEVANT TO WHETHER OR NOT THE SETTLEMENT CAN BRING PEACE TO THE COUNTRY. HE HAS FELT HANDICAPPED BY NOT KNOWING THE POSITION OF THE PATRIOTIC FRONT ON A NUMBER OF ISSUES AS WELL AS ATTITUDES OF THE FRONT LINE AND OTHER NATIONS TOWARD THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT. WE REVIEWED THESE MATTERS AND OTHERS AT LENGTH.

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2. CURTIS MET AT LENGTH WITH BISHOP MUZOREWA ON THE 12TH. THE BISHOP IS STILL CONCERNED OVER THE MATTER OF FINANCES. HE IS WRITING A LETTER TO SECRETARY VANCE ON THIS SUBJECT, WHICH HE WILL GIVE CURTIS TO CARRY BACK (CURTIS MAY LEAVE SALISBURY JUNE 18, RETURNING DIRECTLY TO WASHINGTON). THE LETTER ALSO REQUESTS THAT THE SECRETARY ARRANGE A MEETING BETWEEN CURTIS AND PRESIDENT CARTEER. CURTIS SAID HE TOLD THE BISHOP THAT HE

WAS IN CLOSE CONTACT WITH ME AND THAT I HAD RECEIVED A RESPONSE FROM WASHINGTON ON THE FINANCIAL MATTER SAYING THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO RESOLUTION OF THE MATTER. (I HAD TOLD CURTIS THE NIGHT BEFORE THAT THE POUCH HAD BROUGHT NO COMMENT ON MY EARLIER MESSAGE AND THAT I ASSUMED THIS TO BE A CONFIRMATION OF WHAT I HAD TOLD HIM ON OUR FIRST MEETING THAT WE COULD NOT GET INVOLVED IN THIS KIND OF FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENT.)

3. CURTIS SAID HE SHARED WITH THE BISHOP HIS IMPRESSION THAT THERE WAS STILL CONSIDERABLE SUPPORT IN THE COUNTRY FOR HIM BUT THAT AS VIOLENCE CONTINUED HIS CHANCES WERE BEING HURT. SOME SUPPORT HAD ALREADY DRIFTED AWAY FROM HIM AS A RESULT OF THE CONTINUATION OF THE WAR. CURTIS TOLD THE BISHOP THAT HIS PEOPLE BACK HOME WERE SAYING THAT MUZOREWA HAD BAILED SMITH OUT OF A DIFFICULT SITUATION. THE BISHOP HAD REPLIED THAT HE HAD SWALLOWED HIS PRIDE AND MADE A MAJOR SACRIFICE TO JOIN THE AGREEMENT. HE WAS ONLY ONE OUT OF FOUR IN THE EXECUTIVE AND HE WAS BATTLING AGAINST THE OTHER THREE. CURTIS HAS A STRONG IMPRESSION OF THE BISHOP'S INABILITY TO HANDLE CRISES AT A TIME WHEN HE TALKES OVER THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL.

4. MUZOREWA SAID HIS FIRST PRIORITY AS CHAIRMAN WOULD BE TO GET A WITHDRAWAL OF FORCES FROM ENGAGEMENT IN CONTACT AREAS. THE SECURITY FORCES, HE SAID, SHOULD CHANGE THEIR TACTICS FROM OFFENSIVE TO DEFENSIVE AND PULL BACK TO CONTROLLED AREAS.

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SECONDLY, HE WOULD WORK FOR REPEAL OF DISCRIMINATORY LEGISLATION.

5. CURTIS SAID THE BISHOP HAD MET WITH JOINT OPERATION CHIEF WALLS SUNDAY FOLLOWING NEWS OF THE DEATHS IN MASHONGANYIKA NEAR SALISBURY. THE BISHOP TOLD WALLS, ACCORDING TO CURTIS, THAT THIS KIND OF THING WOULD HAVE TO STOP.

6. CURTIS SAID THE BISHOP DID NOT WARM TO THE IDEA OF AN ALL PARTIES MEETING BUT HE DID NOT REJECT IT. CURTIS TOLD HIM THAT IT WAS IMPORTANT TO MAKE AN ATTEMPT; IF IT FAILED, SO BE IT, BUT CURTIS SAID "OUR PEOPLE" FEEL IT IS IMPORTANT THAT IT APPEAR TO THE OUTSIDE THAT THOSE WHO HAD FOUGHT FOR MAJORITY RULE BE GIVEN A CHANCE. (CURTIS DID NOT REALIZE THAT THE INTERNAL NATIONALISTS HAD OFFERED NKOMO AND MUGABE A PLACE ON THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, NOR WAS HE AWARE OF THE REASONS WHY THEY HAD TURNED IT DOWN.)

7. CURTIS HAS OFFERED TO HELP IN ANY WAY HE CAN AND IS WILLING TO GO ANYWHERE THE BISHOP WOULD LIKE HIM TO. IN THIS CONNECTION THE BISHOP SAID HE DID NOT WANT TO HAVE HAPPEN IN RHODESIA WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO THE NORTH. HE EXPRESSED GREAT DISTRESS WITH KAUNDA, WHO HE SAID WAS DETERMINED TO SUPPORT NKOMO'S ATTEMPT TO COME TO POWER IN RHODESIA.

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PAGE 01 DAR ES 02589 02 OF 02 161923Z
ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W
-----105916 161923Z /43
P 161222Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8947

S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 DAR ES SALAAM 2589

NODIS/CHEROKEE

FOR AF DICK MOOSE FROM LOW

8. COMMENT: CURTIS' GREAT HANDICAP HAS BEEN HIS LACK OF UP-TO-DATE INFORMATION AND BACKGROUND ON THE SITUATION HERE AND PARTICULARLY THE ARGUMENTS AND POSITIONS TAKEN BY THE VARIOUS PARTIES. HE HAS EXCELLENT CONTACTS AND APPEARS TO BE KNOWN AND LIKED. I BELIEVE HE CAN BE A VERY POSITIVE INFLUENCE ON THE SITUATION AND THAT IT WOULD BE USEFUL FOR HIM TO KEEP IN TOUCH WITH IT. HE IS NOT ONLY WELL MEANING AND COOPERATIVE BUT I BELIEVE BASICALLY SOUND. IT WOULD BE MY RECOMMENDATION THAT THE DEPARTMENT MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO KEEP HIM FULLY INFORMED ON THE DEVELOPING SITUATION AND, IF THE BISHOP AGREES AND ENCOURAGES HIM, THAT CURTIS RETURN TO RHODESIA WITHIN THE NEXT THREE OR FOUR WEEKS, DEPENDING ON THE SITUATION.

9. AFTER DRAFTING THE ABOVE, AND A FEW HOURS BEFORE MY DEPARTUE FROM SALISBURY, CURTIS CALLED AGAIN AND ASKED TO COME TO SEE ME URGENTLY. HE REPORTED THAT HE HAD SPENT A COUPLE OF HOURS THE DAY BEFORE WITH IAN SMITH. HE SAID HE HAD TALKED FRANKLY, EVEN BLUNTLY, TO SMITH, WHOM HE HAS KNOWN WELL IN THE PAST, EXPLAINING THAT HE WAS DISAPPOINTED IN THE AGREEMENT, THAT PEOPLE IN THE UNITED STATES AND ELSEWHERE AROUND THE WORLD WOULD NOT ACCEPT IT, THAT MOST PEOPLE WITH WHOM HE HAD TALKED INSIDE RHODESIA WERE NOT CONVINCED IT WOULD WORK AND STRONGLY SUPPORTED A CONFERENCE OF ALL PARTIES WHICH WOULD RESULT IN A
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NEW AGREEMENT. CURTIS SAID SMITH LISTENED CAREFULLY AND SEEMED DISTURBED AT WHAT WAS REPORTED. HE SAID IT DID NOT CONFORM TO THE INFORMATION HE HAD RECEIVED. NEVERTHELESS, HE AGREED THAT THE SITUATION WAS DIFFICULT AND SAID THAT HE HIMSELF WAS QUITE WILLING TO GO TO A CONFERENCE IF HIS ASSOCIATES ON THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL WERE WILLING TO DO SO. THE PROBLEM, HE SAID, WAS WITH THEM, NOT HIM.

10. CURTIS ASKED ME WHAT PROGRESS I HAD MADE. I SAID THAT SMITH'S ATTITUDE CONFORMED TO MY UNDERSTANDING OF HIS POSITION. WHITE MEMBERS OF THE REGIME WERE MUCH MORE RECEPTIVE TO OUR PROPOSAL THAN SOME OF THE AFRICAN NATIONALISTS. CURTIS SAID HE INTENDED TO FOLLOW UP SMITH'S CONVERSATION WITH THE BISHOP AND HE WONDERED WHAT FURTHER HE COULD DO, PARTICULARLY IF HE GETS POSITIVE SIGNALS FROM THE BISHOP. I TOLD HIM I THOUGHT THAT THE ATMOSPHERE WAS IMPROVING AND THAT HE HAD PLAYED A HELPFUL ROLE IN IT. IT MIGHT BE THAT AT SOME LATER POINT WHEN WE WERE CLOSER TO A MEETING HE COULD HELP AGAIN. I DID NOT REFER IN ANY WAY TO DAVID SMITH'S SUGGESTION OF WORKING LEVEL TALKS. HE SAID HE MIGHT DECIDE TO STAY OVER IN SALISBURY UNTIL OUR RETURN NEXT TUESDAY, JUNE 20. I REVIEWED WITH HIM MY IMPRESSION OF THE SENSITIVITY OF THE INTERNAL NATIONALISTS TO ANY PUBLIC SUGGESTION THAT THEY WERE PREPARED TO ENTER INTO A MEETING WITH THE PF AND THAT THEREFORE I WAS NOT AT ALL UNHAPPY WITH THE HEADLINES IN THE MORNINGS PAPER WHICH REPORTED THAT GRAHAM AND I WERE LEAVING SALISBURY HAVING FAILED AGAIN TO SET UP ALL PARTY TALKS. HE UNDERSTOOD THE POINT.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, CAT-C, MEETING REPORTS, MEETINGS, POLITICAL SITUATION, POLITICAL PARTIES, CHEROKEE 6-16-78
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 16 jun 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978DARES02589
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: OA
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: P840153-2653
Format: TEL
From: DAR ES SALAAM
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780651/aaaabsic.tel
Line Count: 199
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: ef27e287-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NODS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2326302
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: RHODESIA: CURTIS MEETINGS
TAGS: PDEV, US, RH, (CURTIS, TM)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/ef27e287-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014